



**MINUTES OF THE
Special Meeting of the
Edina Transportation Commission**
Thursday, February 22, 2007
Edina City Hall
4801 West 50th Street
Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Les Wanninger, Marie Thorpe, Jean White, Marc Usem, Steve Brown

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Hilah Almog, Warren Plante, Geof Workinger

STAFF PRESENT:

Wayne Houle, Jack Sullivan, Sharon Allison

West 70th Street Corridor Traffic Study Public Hearing
Residents south of West 70th Street

Chair Wanninger called the meeting to order.

Wanninger said the sole purpose of the public hearing is for the ETC to listen to the residents. He said all comments received thus far are available for review at the libraries, the Senior Center, the Engineering Dept. and the City's website. He said questions raised at the public hearings will be answered at a later time and posted at the locations previously mentioned for all to see. The study process will take approximately one year, said Wanninger.

Wanninger described the study area as Hwy. 100 to France Avenue and Hwy. 62 to the Fred Richards Golf Course. He said after this first round of public hearings a Study Advisory Committee will begin meeting to review residents' comments and data collected by the traffic consultants. The Study Advisors to the ETC will be made up of W. 70th residents (Earl Benson, Dave Hatzung and Peter Warner), City staff and Planning Commission members, City of Richfield's staff and a Transportation Commission member, representatives from area businesses, CPC Church, the School District, Hennepin County, Mn/DOT, and SRF, the traffic consultants.

Wanninger said some things are already known such as congestion certain times of day, heavier traffic volume since 1984, speeding, crashes, cut-thru, etc. and others would be revealed tonight. He said the rumor surrounding a 4-lane highway is false and the only decision that has been made so far is to conduct the traffic study. The meeting was then turned over to the residents to speak as follows:

Ronald Rich, 7008 West Shore Drive

- Have not heard any plans to expand W. 70th but cannot help believing that there is a "hidden agenda" based on "neighborhood concerns (speeding, high traffic volume, residential access)" of which he is supportive; "Southdale Area Redevelopment, ETC

Problem Ranking (identified in previous studies as traffic at its capacity) and the ETC['s] desire for board support.”

- “...selection of the ETC “study advisors” indicates bias against neighborhood”
- Hidden agenda is evident in “city council’s recent approval of three-roundabout[s]”
- “Widening 70th is polar opposite to residential goals,...
- Do not “understand the apparent design irrationality of introducing three single lane roundabouts on 70th Street...”
- “Normal engineering requires a more complete assessment of area traffic flows following a stated design goal.”

Patricia Harmon, 7129 Cornelia Drive

- The Sun Newspaper had an article saying 70th, east of France is going to be two lanes, do the same for the other side;
- Put a 4-way stop sign at West Shore and 70th;
- Lower speed limit to 20 mph on Cornelia since it is not a state aid street;

Gary Hudson, 4512 Belvidere Lane

- It was not clear from the letter that residents were being held firm to the meeting dates; would like to hear the points-of-view of residents who attended the other two meetings; suggested separating by alphabetical order in the future;
- Cut-thru traffic on West Shore to Belvidere and on to France;
- Put a stoplight at either West Shore or Wooddale, this would help to slow traffic;

Morgan Larson, 7204 Monardo Lane

- No access to the west and south for those who live south of 70th; only choice is 70th and it is difficult to get on to;
- Promote public transportation;
- If police cannot stop speeding, install stoplights;

David J. Carlson, 4713 Aspasia Circle

- Representative from the Greater 70th St. Homeowners Association
- Petition drive sponsored to show broad support in the Cornelia Neighborhood for changes that would enhance residential nature, promote traffic safety, especially around the Cornelia School, and presume the integrity of the parks and community.
- Petition included: no thru trucks, slower speeds, new pedestrians and bike access, maintain current width/location of 70th, beautification measures; originals of signed petitions were presented to the ETC at an earlier meeting.
- Concept drawing of what they would like 70th to look like – a parkway with name change, blacktop, crosswalks, flashing pedestrian lights, bike lanes and plantings;
- Greatest inconvenience is exiting service road, making left turns between 4-6:30 p.m., dealing with traffic coming east/west, out of the church and off the freeway;
- Greatest hope is that the entire neighborhood will be enhanced by calming traffic, increase accessibility for pedestrians and bikes, improve safety around school and increase general attractiveness;
- State aid is a detriment and should be dropped;
- Future developments that does not lead to enhancement could lead to the area becoming 2nd class;
- If widening were to go away residents would be more comfortable with whatever evolve and it should become a dead issue;

Bob Rofidal, 7125 Bristol Blvd

- Traffic was an issue before church and it still is;
- The City keeps changing variables that affects traffic such as Greatland Target and other approved redevelopments;
- 70th will become a freeway after options are gone;
- Stop redevelopments and figure out traffic with redevelopments in mind;

Joan Bolduc, 7001 West Shore Drive

- Hope these are not performa meetings;
- Feel other interest may have already decided what will happen, such as Grammercy and high end hotel, with residents in the middle;
- Agrees with many suggestions and take issues with some;
- 70th seems to be the stepchild with interest of developers taken more seriously and meetings are held to make it appear that you are interested in what residents has to say;
- Neighbors have given wonderful suggestions that may or may not work and you are limiting yourself by saying it's a state aid road or by saying you have to service retail and make 70th the corridor. You could open your imagination and start with Arneson Park;
- Listen to all the suggestions, but no stoplights, find other methods to slow traffic;

Linda Presthus, 4921 Belvidere Lane

- Used 70th as access to Southdale and other places when she lived on Lanham Lane and she looked at it differently than she does now; she also drives it differently now that she lives on Belvidere;
- Trust that the ETC will be doing its job and going through all the studies; this is how she believes government works;
- In the interim, consider a stop sign and not a stoplight, during the study process at West Shore; it is difficult to get out from the south side;

Vaughn Asseltine, 4513 Ellsworth Drive

- How were the residents appointed?
- Concerned with piecemeal approach; a Southdale focus group study was done not too long ago and the participants were told to forget about money and create a vision of what they would like to see and in the end they all had a vision that included access for pedestrians and bikes; the focus was to decrease traffic and have public transportation; some of the plans are still around such as a bridge going over France;
- Emphasis is more on developments and traffic problem is already bad and will get worst;
- Hope the goal is not to accommodate more traffic but to solve the problem and to give other options than cars;
- Believe they have an opportunity to make area more pedestrian friendly and livable;

Tom Sullivan, 4512 Hibiscus Avenue

- City officials told them high-rise, mixed-used, high-density housing is trend of the future and 20-year comprehensive plan drawn up to provide housing in the Southdale area for seniors which will be designed primarily to encourage walking;
- Last year when they were discussing developments, he talked about traffic and Council member Housh said they could not solve the traffic problems;
- The chairman of the Planning Commission invites developers to call in between meetings for private discussions and they get three minutes;

- Sun Newspaper brags about roundabouts; why is the City more concerned about shoppers and hotel guests than safety of children crossing 70th;
- Having no plans for 70th is a cause for alarm; City is pushing ahead with developers because they are threatening with alternatives if the City waits;
- Developers are not concerned with preserving integrity of neighborhoods and, as they've observed, City officials are in line with developers;
- The rumor of 70th being widened comes from the Greater Southdale Land Use Study of December 2005;
- Star Tribune had an article regarding children having safe routes to walk to school;
- Allowing high speeds causes parents to drive children to school;
- How many know that Planning Commission changed their mission statement within last year? Cannot trust them to do what's best because they are under a lot of pressure from developers;

Josh Sprague, 4720 48th St. W.

- Chair of Greater 70th Street Association;
- City cares about quality of life from the residents' point-of-view and would like to see the ETC and Council do the same for 70th;
- Can put aside the procedural flaws, but will hold the representatives accountable for the results;
- When the business people go home, the residents will still be there;
- They are not just another voice, they are the voice;
- Truck traffic is a safety, quality of life, noise and pollution issue and the only solution is to drop state aid;
- Would like a broad view on committee to consider that their rendition of 70th could be achieved by dropping state aid;
- Their plan is a win-win for all the different constituencies involved and they've met with the Mayor and Council member Housh;
- Their plan is a comprehensive solution that ties in with the 20/20 vision plan to restore and protect residential integrity;

Wanninger said their proposal will be considered by the SAC.

Kris Norton, 7007 Cornelia Drive

- Member of the Homeowners Association;
- Have heard lots of support for Arneson Parkway;
- Another term for cut-thru traffic could be metro-wide speeding using 70th as short-cut;
- 70th is the thru street and they are okay with this, but three other avenues exist (TH-494, 76th/77th and TH-62);
- Parkway design will have slower speed, calmer traffic and easier neighborhood access and hopefully reduce cut-thru traffic;
- Wants to stay positive and believe that ETC and Council will be supportive of them but is tedious with input; there is no dialogue; she's put her name in the hat to be part of the SAC but have not been chosen; happy to have had the chance for input but it feels hollow;
- Do not believe the City can move large volumes of traffic, calm and reduce traffic, and increase safety with one plan; Arneson Parkway can;

Todd Porthan, 7301 Wooddale Avenue

- Worked public safety for the City for the past 10 years;

- Cut-thru have gotten increasingly worse;
- Crossing 70th to public attractions can take 10 minutes even with sign for pedestrians posted;
- Cannot wait one year, something needs to be done today to protect children;
- To everyone that lives in the area shame on you for going over 30 mph, need to set example as residents;

JB Overstreet, 4813 Dunberry Lane

- Member of the Homeowners Association;
- How will information be conveyed to residents from the ETC and SAC after the series of public hearings?
- Two options: push more traffic through or make safer streets; however, do not see that you can have a goal with these two options;

Regarding communications, Wanninger said he is not sure their meetings will be televised, however, minutes will be made available on the website, in the libraries, newsletters will be published in the Sun Newspaper, etc. and more public hearings will be scheduled as they progress with the planning. He said they will be aggressive in making sure they are communicating with the residents.

Sheila Wright, 7128 Gloucester Avenue

- Quality and investment comes to mind when she thinks of Edina;
- Quality of life is outstanding, but by enlarging 70th homes will devalue;
- Ask that you take this into account and make a return investment in the residents by giving them something that is aesthetically pleasing, safe and clean;
- Take some pride so 70th can become a work of art and beauty and serve as an example for the rest of the country;

Melissa Jancourt, 6900 Wooddale Avenue

- Thanked neighbors for efforts and prepared statements;
- Lives in the Creston Hills Neighborhood where there is an elementary school and last year she heard arguments about putting in sidewalks so the children can walk to school;
- Does not believe crosswalks alone will work, drivers do not respect them; need to look at more significant measures;
- Regarding the support against global warming, would be curious to see how many new developments have been approved that LEED certification would be a part of this development; are we taking our sustainable values and including that into our attitudes and approval towards development;

George Griffiths, 4444 Dunham Drive

- Had presentation prepared until he read about roundabouts in the Sun Newspaper;
- He agrees that traffic will slow down, but what happens west? Mass parking lot or angry drivers finding another route; this will probably send them to 76th/77th, TH-494 or TH-62;
- If we're not residential, tell us so;
- Design challenges on both ends of 70th with two lanes going to one in short distance;

Ardis Wexler, 4913

- Commended neighbors for coming to meetings;

- Recalls a meeting at Braemar to look at redevelopment of France; discussion was about making France and York parkways to deal with traffic;
- With heavy traffic on Hwy. 100 and France, she is concerned with what is going to happen within the study boundary;

Larry Friedrichs, 4601 Gilford Drive

- Thanked the ETC for all their hard work;
- Believe the process has been very good and everyone was notified;
- Problems since 1984, so take the year to study, no need to jump into anything rash;
- You're doing a great job and thanks for listening to us;

Craig Coleman, 7024 West Shore Drive

- Has learned to criss-cross in different directions in order to get out onto 70th;
- Drives his 14-year old daughter to CPC because she's afraid to cross 70th;

Ron Naae, 4508 Dunberry Lane

- Suggested finding alternative ways to get industrial park off 70th and make it the northern tier; put an entrance on the frontage road to Hwy. 100;
- Need to share the traffic load with 66th; this was the road to Southdale;
- Knows that we have a problem and hope that we can "think outside the bun;"
- Maybe an exit at Metro Blvd that would go south only;
- Severe problem on 70th, but cannot make it a 4-lane road;
- Doing a good job and is glad the residents have the opportunity to express their concerns;
- Try to "think outside the bun;"

Mark Chamberlain, 7004 Bristol Blvd

- Many comments regarding drivers ignoring pedestrians at crosswalks; suggested a crosswalk like they have at 102nd Street in Bloomington with a flashing light and a button that pedestrians can activate to change the light to red;

Kate Overstreet,

- As a part of your aggressive communication, do you plan on responding to the many questions that have been posed to you, or will you pick and chose?

Wanninger said they will address the broader questions, including the goal, as they get further in the planning process.

Nancy Siemers, 7004 Lynmar Lane

- Consider the amount of stopping time at the stoplight at 70th & France; this frustrates drivers and they find alternative routes to avoid the lights;
- Heard that France has been rezoned on the west side for taller buildings and if this occur traffic will increase;

Colby Wilkins, 4515 W. 70th Street

- Serves on the steering committee for their group;
- Part of him believes there is a dialogue and the other part says he's talking to a wall;
- If 85% of people are speeding, why aren't the police writing speeding tickets and making some money?

- Chief of Police said at a safety meeting that it is too dangerous for the police officers on 70th and therefore no speed trap;
- Regarding participation of the church and school, he said it was difficult to get a dialogue with the City over the last year and they were told by the schools that the problem was a political one;
- Residents wants to be part of the solution;

John Bohan, 800 Coventry Place

- Street is at capacity and there continues to be more redevelopment;
- Have to make it a 4-lane road or route traffic somewhere else;
- Put in roundabouts without much discussion which will not help traffic;
- Announce your goals very soon and not drag it on for months;

Mary Ellen Chamberlain, 7004 Bristol Blvd

- SAC seems out of balance with only 3 residential members; would you consider adding more?

Wanninger said they are using similar methods used for the successful NE Edina Traffic Study. He said it will not be a majority vote or equal voice but more gathering perspectives from all who will be impacted.

Brown, a resident of the Cornelia area and new member to the ETC, said the ETC is not charged with decision-making, all decisions will be made by the Council. He said the purpose of the meetings is to get as much input from the residents and having more people will not change what is said or done. He said the ETC is looking for a representative group so that they can understand all the issues. He said it is a residential area but it is also the corridor that services the church and the school and these entities need to be represented. He reiterated that the ETC is only a recommending body which makes this process very important. He said the residents can always call their elected representatives.

In reference to removing the thought of a 4-lane roadway, Brown said in order to do the study, they must consider all the options and their effects on the area. However, no pre-determined decisions have been made and the process will be more effective if people come to the table looking for solutions as opposed to criticizing.

Janet Bohan, 800 Coventry Place

- Heard reference to a traffic simulation model and asked about the status.

Wanninger said the model is being developed by WSB as part of the Comp Plan. Houle said it is being developed simultaneously with the Comp Plan. Wanninger said the Comp Plan and the model will help them to develop credible solutions for W. 70th.

Wanninger said he believes that everyone wants a good solution and their experience with the NE Edina Study was that people did not believe they could come up with solutions and they did. He said they've learned things from each of the meetings and appreciate all the input and hopes that in the end, when the residents listen to the final draft, they will hear some things that may need tweaking.

Wanninger thanked everyone for coming and restated that they will be kept informed during the year-long process. Meeting adjourned.